

now runs closely parallel to Disraeli's own experience in the case of *Vivian Crrey*. *Manstein* is a rapid sketch of the development of the poetic character, the hero 'a youth whose mind is ever combating with his situation.' It never strikes Contarini that he is delineating his own character, and this may have been true of Disraeli when he wrote *Vivian Crrey*. In the following passage we may assume that we have an exact account of the feelings with which Disraeli regarded his earliest novel five years after its publication: —

For the work itself, it was altogether a most crude performance, teeming with innumerable faults. It was entirely deficient in art. The principal character, although forcibly conceived, for it was founded on truth, was not sufficiently developed. Of course, the others were much less so. The incidents were unnatural, the serious characters exaggerations, the comic ones caricatures; the wit was too often flippant, the philosophy too often forced; yet the vigour was remarkable, the licence of an uncurbed imagination not without charms, and, on the whole, there breathed a freshness which is rarely found, and which, perhaps, with all my art and knowledge, I may never again afford: and, indeed, when I recall the heat with which this little work was written, I am convinced that, with all its errors, the spark of true creation animated its fiery page.¹

Manstein proves life. In depicting

hero was forced a decisive influence in
to heart finds Contarini's the scenes of society
vent personality. amid which his move, the
The long bitterness of the author's in
preserved, and slashing satire and malignant
Everybody takes anonymity which shelters him is
a his portraits. not there is at once a
tremendous outcry, delight in
detecting the originals of

Various keys were handed
about, all different; 'and not
content with recognizing the very
few decided sketches from life
which there really were, and
which were sufficiently obvious,
and not very malignant, they
mischievously insisted

i Pt. II. ch. 12.